

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS CITED FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRACTICE AND INSTRUCTION**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Three public preschool teachers recently received Classroom of Excellence Awards from the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood Development.

The three are:

- Christine Clark, The Family and Children's Place, Jefferson Co.
- Lisa Mudd, Dixie Elementary School, Fayette Co.
- April Throgmorton, Morgan Elementary, Paducah Ind.

The voluntary Classrooms of Excellence program identifies high-quality state-funded preschool classrooms, based on a comprehensive review of activities and methodology. Applicants participate in an intensive self-study and also must show that their classrooms meet specific criteria:

- use of the *Building A Strong Foundation* series, which includes preschool standards, parent guides, continuous assessment tools and the Quality Self Study
- a minimum average score of 6.0 on the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS-R)
- an "Exemplary" category score on the *Early Learning and Language Classroom Observation* (ELLCO)
- IECE certification or Letter of Exemption for lead teachers
- regional or national accreditation, either current or in progress

In addition to these awards, Calloway County Preschool Center has been recognized as Kentucky's first Early Childhood Center of Excellence. The Rowan County Preschool Center also joins four previously identified Centers of Quality.

The Early Childhood Centers of Quality designation was developed in 2008 as a response to stakeholder recommendations for statewide services to deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students. Centers that achieve this distinction will serve as models of practice for other districts in the region through on-site consultation, mentoring and presentations at state, regional and national levels.

(more)

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Successful applicants for the designation included the following components:

- state-funded preschool program located in a stand-alone facility with an on-site administrator
- on-site services provided to children with visual and hearing impairments
- services provided within regular early childhood classrooms
- national or regional early childhood accreditation
- Kentucky Early Childhood Standards and Parent Guides implemented
- ongoing assessment data utilized in classroom instructional planning
- professional development individualized for the staff.

Additional criteria for Centers of Excellence, implemented for the first time this year, include:

- Center of Quality designation
- use of the *Building A Strong Foundation* series, which includes preschool standards, parent guides, continuous assessment tools and Quality Self Study
- a minimum, combined average center score of 6.0 on the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS-R) and meet all substantial portion of the day indicators (1/3 of preschool day consists of child-initiated learning/activities)
- majority of teachers hold IECE certification
- receive on-site review visit

This year's award recipients will be recognized and honored with a reception during the RTC Summer Institute at Louisville's Galt House and Convention Center on Monday, June 15, at 4:30 p.m.

Kentucky's preschool education programs are available for all 4-year-old children whose family income is no more than 150% of poverty; all 3- and 4-year-old children with developmental delays and disabilities, regardless of income; and other 4-year-old children as placements are available based on district decision. The preschool program is designed to be developmentally appropriate for young children. "Developmentally appropriate" is defined in law to mean that the program focuses on the child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development, including interpersonal, intrapersonal and socialization skills.

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